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SUBJECT: Fortnightly Newsletter - December 1, 1951

POLITICAL

Zik Has Proposed a Coalition Between NCNC and AG

Dr. AZIKIWE, National President of the NCNC dropped a political bombshell on December 14, 1951, when in an open letter to AWOLOWO, leader of the Action Group, he asked for cooperation "because there is so much that we can do to relieve the present tension". Azikiwe proposed a coalition of the two parties, indicating his belief that, while policies of the two differ, he feels that they can find a modus operandi, in the interests of Nigeria as a whole. It is not known what Awolowo's reaction may be, but in view of his well-known hatred for Azikiwe, and of AG's claim to an overwhelming majority in the Western House, there is considerable doubt as to the outcome. Of course Awolowo might lay aside his personal feelings in the interests of political advantage.

Zik's Press Was Fined £300 for Publication of Seditious Editorial Following Victory of Tory Party in England

On December 11, 1951, the Lagos Supreme Court found Zik's Press guilty of sedition and fined it £300. The seditious matter was contained in an editorial captioned "Goodnight to Colonial Freedom", published in the West African Pilot on October 27, 1951. In handing down his decision, the African judge stated that the editorial attempted to show that the idea of freedom must be abandoned because the new Tory government was against it. He maintained that the editorial was such that it could incite and promote ill will between Nigeria and Britain.

Mayor of Lagos Does Not Wish to Relinquish His Office

It is understood that Mr. OLORUN-NIMBE is unwilling to resign the office of Mayor of Lagos now that he has been elected to the Western House. It was expected that the office of Mayor would be available to appease one of the Lagos politicians who lost in the election to the Western House. Apparently Nimbe had originally

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pledged that he would step down if successful in the elections, but it appears that he has changed his mind now. It is understood that Nimbe does not want to give up his present office until he can be sure of becoming a Minister in the Western Region. The AG believes that the office of Mayor should be abolished, and states that it will work to that end.

Election Results in the North and East Are Still Unclear

Both parties claim heavy majorities in East and North, but the actual political lineup in those areas will not be known for some time. The first meeting of the new Eastern House of Assembly has been set for January 5, 1952.

The Formation of a Northern Peoples Congress

News reports indicate that this organization will confer shortly with elected members of the Northern House who believe in their programs. It will discuss its own party organization and its future policy. This may indicate a gradual political awakening of the North, and may be a bold move to organize in that area. The Northern Peoples Congress now seems to be the dominant political party of the North.

The Action Group, Claiming to be the Majority Party, Wants to be Consulted on the Running of the New Legislature in the West

AG leaders, who claim a large majority in the Western House, took a dim view of fact that the Chief Commissioner of the Western Provinces and the Central Government did not at once recognize the AG as the majority party and party in power in the Western Region. It had been expected that such officials would have consulted Awolowo, leader of AG and other members of the parliamentary committee of that organization for discussions on future running of the Western Regional Legislature. The press indicates that certain of the desired consultations have now taken place.

The AG claims that there is a veiled hostility toward the AG on the part of white government officials, who are termed "limpets", the objective being to weaken the AG and render implementation of its policy papers impracticable. AG maintains that it has not yet been really recognized by white Nigerian Government officials as the majority party in the Western Region and that it has thus been slighted to date.

NCNC Wants Zik and Adedoyin for the Center

The Central Working Committee of the NCNC decided at a meeting held last night that Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Prince Adeleke Adedoyin

should represent Lagos in the House of Representatives. The other three elected members of the Western House of Assembly have been advised not to accept nomination to go to the House of Representatives.

It is a moot question as to whether the others will agree to this procedure, particularly the present Mayor, Dr. Olorun-Nimbe, as the latter is known to have an aspiration to reach the Central House and, perhaps, become a minister. The Muslims in the Democratic Party also want Dr. Nimbe to go to the Central House

There is Being Organized a New Nigerian CPP

The first official release of the National Preparatory Committee of this new organization says that it will have no connection with the CPP of the Gold Coast. It will be made up of leaders of labor unions, ex-service men, sedition convicts (prison graduates), farmers, youth and progressive working-class intellectuals, etc. The Preparatory Committee states that Nduka EZE is not associated with the new party.

There is evidence that the new Nigerian CPP will cooperate very closely with the already existing Nigerian People's Congress.

Recently the head of NPC conferred with NKRUMAH in Accra, Gold Coast, and there are here now two representatives of the Gold Coast CPP (N. A. Welbeck, National Propaganda Secretary, and Turkson Ocran, Parliamentary Secretary). The AG says they are here to found a branch of the CPP in Nigeria, and that this is a stupendous national insult.

The NPC has broken off all relations with the NCNC.

The NCNC Has Set 1956 as the Time for Nigeria to Reach Self-Rule Status

The NCNC believes that 1956 will be the pivot on which will be determined Nigeria's right to self-determination. The organization says that it has lessons to learn from India, Ceylon, Burma, the Sudan and the Gold Coast. An editorial in above regard, appearing in Zik's "West African Pilot", ends with the following words:

"Our masters know that they owe it as a debt to mankind to set us free. But it is becoming traditional with the British, and more so with Britain under a Churchillian government, not to withdraw as honourably as they came. So that the spirit of camaraderie, that unifying adhesive which had held us together in the past, may continue to hold us indissolubly after within the Commonwealth -- this great family of nations. Yes, we are ripe and 1956 is our date with destiny."

There is a Rumor that the Tory Government Wishes to Reverse the "Nigerianization" Which Took Place Here Under the Labor Government

There has been going the rounds a rumor that the Tory Government has decided to arrest and if possible reverse, the process of Nigerianization. It is said that the Tory Government views with abhorrence the extent to which Nigerianization has gone during the Labor regime when Africans were elevated to the position of Heads of Central Departments. It is said that instructions have been issued that the idea of creating more African Heads of Departments is to be shelved completely.

There is no way of knowing whether there is any truth to this rumor, as the British have obviously made no statement in that regard. If the rumor is true it would be handled as a top secret matter.

ECONOMIC

Funds for New Boat-Building Industry Provided

The Eastern Regional Production Development Board has approved an expenditure of £30,000 for establishing a boat industry at Opobo, in the East. The Palm Produce Marketing Board supplies the latter organization with funds.

LABOR

"Go-Slow" Strike on Part of Locomotive Drivers' (Engineers) Union Threatens to Dislocate Nigeria's Entire Economy

For the last two years this union and management (a branch of the Government) have been at odds concerning salary rates, improved promotion possibilities, and related matters, without having been able to get together completely. This has culminated in a previously threatened "go-slow" strike which began December 10, 1951. This is causing much inconvenience to travellers, and important losses to shippers, and if it goes much farther it could have a profoundly unfavorable effect on the country's general economy, in which the railways are an important link.

Trains running between Lagos and Ibadan, which usually consume five hours en route, now take twelve hours. The management has warned that all those who do less than a day's work will be liable to dismissal, that there may result large scale lay-offs, and that communities dependent upon coal, which moves by the railway, will have their electricity and water services severely curtailed.

The management has said that it is not in a position to grant the large salary increases demanded. Through the press the drivers say that they are determined to hold out to the bitter end.

Various conciliation meetings have been held, but without important result to date. The drivers want a salary increase from the £180 to £250 ($504 - $700) scale to £270 - £370 ($756 - $1036) per year

One result of the strike to date is an increase in truck and bus rates.

OTHER

Nigerian Teachers Union Calls for Technical College Now

The Nigerian Union of Teachers, through its General Secretary, Mr. E. E. ESUA, has urged the Government to open without delay the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology. The Gold Coast counterpart of this college will open in January.

Mr. Esua, speaking before the Northern Board of Education recently, said an early opening of the College will relieve the shortage of qualified secondary school teachers in Nigeria - especially in the Northern Provinces where educational facilities, both in quality and quantity, lag behind those of the South.

Because there appears to be difficulty in recruiting the necessary technical staff for the College, the Union has suggested that Government take advantage of the UN Technical Assistance Program. Mr. Esua received the support of the entire Northern Board.

Mass Adult Education Campaigns Scheduled

Mass Adult Education campaigns in Lagos environs will be conducted from January 7 - 19 under the direction of Mr. S. I. Oladipo, the Acting Adult Education Organizer.

Community conferences, adult instructors' meetings, and public appeals utilizing the Public Relations Office vans and loudspeakers will be used in securing greater support and cooperation in the Adult Education Program.

The New Constitution for Nigeria Causes Many Changes in Functions and in Titles of Government Officials

The Chief Commissioners of the three regions will now become lieutenant governors. The Governor has approved of the establishment of the posts of civil secretary, legal secretary, and financial secretary in each region, in place of the posts of secretary, regional Senior Crown Counsel and Secretary (Finance).